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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

411

Research Memorandum
INR-92, October 26, 1962

TO : The Secretary
THROUGH : S/S
FROM : INR - Roger Hilsman
SUBJECT : Free World Reactions to Cuban Crisis

Roger Hilsman

AFRICA

Sympathetic

The most sympathetic response has come from Liberia, Sierra Leone, the UAM (Brazzaville twelve) states, Tunisia, and the Republic of South Africa. For these states the salient factor in the crisis, initially at least, is Soviet recklessness. They tend to view Castro as irresponsible. The Sudanese and Somali governments also displayed understanding of the US position. Surprisingly, in the group of pro-Western states, Ethiopian official reaction was critical, possibly in part because the Emperor was absent from the capital -- but Ethiopia is not expected to take actions adverse to US interests.

The friendliness privately expressed will not necessarily produce positive measures of support. With rare exceptions -- notably President Tubman of Liberia -- few African heads of state care to be quoted publicly as endorsing the US action, although some have indicated they would vote in behalf of the US in the UN. It must be recognized that the assurances proffered in African capitals are often lost sight of in New York, where the psychological initiative is often seized by the radical African states, such as Ghana.

Imaginary

Few African governments reacted with open hostility to the US move, and the possibility of a hot war seems to have constrained even the most radical regimes to caution. Only the Algerian leaders came out with unqualified support for "the Cuban people" and they published this view in the name of the Political Bureau of the ruling party, not as an official government declaration. It is noteworthy that Premier Ben Bella has said to our charge that Algerian airfields will not be available to the Bloc for Cuban flights. Semi-official news media in Ghana and Mali as well as in Algeria view the crisis as a contest between the US and Cuba rather than the US and USSR, although in all three countries there is implicit or explicit acknowledgement that the world peace may be at stake.

Undecided or Undependable

A number of African countries have so far followed a policy of silence. Among the most important of these are Nigeria, Guinea, and Morocco. Nigeria's stance may influence other African states. OAS solidarity may not impress the Nigerians as much as it has the members of the UAM. But the argument that Castro is no longer a neutral now that he has agreed to the installation of Soviet missile bases probably carries considerable weight not only with the Nigerians but with the Guineans and other neutrals as well.

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Countries of Special Significance for Air Transit

Based on facilities and distance from Havana, Senegal and Guinea offer the most useful transit points for Soviet flights to Cuba. Senegal has publicly refused to allow its territory to be used for such flights. Guinea has told us privately that it will not allow transit rights. While the Guinea Government is currently cultivating good relations with the US, its position on Soviet flights to Cuba conflicts with important elements of official and public opinion.

The next most useful stop-over points are in Morocco and Mali. It appears that prior to the present crisis Morocco had given the USSR onward rights for flights to Cuba. Existing facilities probably can accommodate TU-114s. The Government of Morocco has not taken an official position on the Cuban situation and apparently wishes to avoid doing so. Moroccan officials have responded to US representations concerning Soviet landing privileges only with promises to "do what they could" about the matter.

Though Mali has not yet voiced an official view on the situation, it is not anticipated that it will support the United States. Mali's position regarding air rights would become important only if Guinea and Morocco should refuse to allow Soviet aircraft to transit, and in that case Mali would probably do the same.

Least useful to the USSR would be transit facilities in Algeria and Ghana. It is not clear whether the distances to Havana would permit a meaningful payload for the TU-114 if the only available stop-overs were in those countries. Some cargo could probably be carried, and these two countries may prove politically the most accessible to Soviet aircraft, despite Ben Bella's flat statement to US officials that transit rights would not be given.

WESTERN EUROPEGeneral

Western European reaction to the US blockade of Cuba has undergone some changes during the first three days since the President's announcement. There has resulted a general recognition that the situation warranted or even demanded vigorous US action, and acquiescence in, or outright approval of, the action taken. The degree in which this broad support by government and press was given, of course, varied from country to country; West Germany and the Netherlands were perhaps strongest and most outspoken in their approval, while the British and Italian press, at least initially, expressed perhaps the most doubt. Nevertheless, on the whole the response of the NATO countries has been one of understanding and support.

Both press and some official reactions noted a lack of "prior consultation." DeGaulle was presumably miffed by this lack, and some Italians seemed seriously annoyed, while some of the press made quite a point of it. However, in general the absence of consultation was accepted as necessary and at least in the short run the negative reactions do not appear of serious consequence.

Considerable doubt was expressed initially, notably in the British and Italian press, as to the facts of the situation, but there is now quite general acceptance of both the facts and their significance as set forth by the US, which has led to stronger support for the American position.

There was naturally much speculation as to the possible upshot of the US action. There was widespread fear that the Russians might counter with action elsewhere, notably in Berlin, or that there might be a clash in the Caribbean, either of which might lead to war in Europe. Contrary opinions held that only by such firm action could the Soviets be halted. There were frequently expressed hopes that by negotiation, UN action, or a Summit meeting the matter might somehow be peacefully resolved. Thus far there has been no concerted push in any direction.

NEAREASTERN AREA

India

In India the Cuban crisis has been overshadowed by the border fighting. The limited editorial comment reported to date has generally been unfavorable to the US. Nehru's public and private reactions were relatively mild.

Pakistan

The Pakistani press has generally blamed the US for the Cuban crisis and some of the editorials have urged the government to stress Pakistan's non-involvement. No official reaction has been reported to date, but editorial comment has been unfriendly. Some military officers privately have indicated relief that the US finally has acted. Pakistani reaction in general is colored by preoccupation with regional quarrels and by the feeling that the US has not given Pakistan enough support in these quarrels.

Iran

The press has tended to regard the US and the USSR as being equally at fault in the crisis. The Shah is aware of this press attitude and is ready to inform the press of his pro-US stand. The Iranian Government may tend to be somewhat cautious on the Cuban issue because of the danger of Soviet retaliatory action.

Greece and Turkey

Official reaction in Greece and Turkey has been firmly in support of the US action.

UAR

Official guidance to the UAR press deplores and opposes the blockade, the establishment of military bases on foreign soil and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The primary theme of the newspapers is that the US quarantine imperils world peace. Nasser's first reaction indicates concern over the possibility of trouble with Israel or with the British in Yemen as a result of US preoccupation with Cuba. In the UN the UAR representative called for "a neutralist socialist Cuba," opposed the introduction of nuclear weapons into Cuba, and called for removal of all foreign bases including Soviet bases in Cuba. Privately the UAR representative stated that the US was right in opposing the establishment of a Soviet puppet state 90 miles from the Florida coast and that he has been very impressed by the US pictures of the rocket bases. The relatively mild

public UAR reaction will probably have considerable influence on the reaction in other Arab states, except Iraq, where reaction predictably has been more strongly pro-Soviet.

FAR EAST

General

At the end of the first week of the Cuban crisis reaction in the Free World Asian countries ranged from isolated left-wing criticism of the US position to full support. The majority opinion, both official and private, generally acquiesced in the US position. Second thoughts, particularly if the immediate danger of general war declines, may increase anti-American pressures, especially in nonaligned countries and from left opposition groups.

Asian Communist reaction remained extremely reserved with no effort to inflate the crisis or to force a Soviet-US confrontation.

Japan

Japanese response has on the whole been of understanding but concern. The government on October 24 stated its agreement that the Cuban missile bases menaced American security and the world balance of power. Some Japanese air force bases have been alerted in coordination with the US Air Force alert. On the other hand, the government indicated that the Cuban quarantine is at best a necessary evil and expressed the hope that the crisis can be settled in the United Nations.

The press, while expressing sympathy, has placed relatively more stress on the risks of the situation and, in general, appears to be unwilling to come down on either side. The Socialist opposition is thoroughly critical of US policy; but does not seem to regard the issue as one which permits all out exploitation.

Communist Chinese

Chinese Communist comment on the crisis concentrates on the Cuban-US aspect of the conflict and ignores the possibility of a specific US-Soviet bloc clash. There is no hint in any of the published materials of any intended counteraction or program of mass demonstrations by Peiping. Comment plays down the specific danger of world war but repeats stock allegations that the US action endangers "peace" in general and in the Caribbean in particular.

LATIN AMERICA

General

Communists in Latin America in shocked surprise or intimidated have not reacted strongly to the US action. So far demonstrations can be rated as failures.

Non-communist reaction is well known and this review is consequently restricted to two countries of special interest, Brazil and Mexico.

Brazil

Brazilian official reaction to the situation in Cuba was varied significantly, depending on the audience addressed. In conversations with our Ambassador, President Goulart and Premier Hermes Lima have stated their full understanding of the serious threat to United States security represented by the offensive buildup in Cuba and the government's readiness to support the quarantine action. The Premier implied on October 25 that Brazil might also support additional forceful measures to insure removal or destruction of missiles in Cuba, provided full information is conveyed to it on the reasons for such action. Although it joined other Latin American states in voting for the US-sponsored resolution in the OAS on October 23, Brazil abstained on the second paragraph of the resolution calling for forceful measures, including military action, to deal with the Cuban buildup. But in a public statement on October 23 the Government indicated that it would not support the use of force violating the territorial integrity of another country and jeopardizing world peace.

In the UN Brazil sought to play the role of somewhat neutral intermediary, and its representatives put forth a proposal for the denuclearization of Latin America, as well as other areas, as a suggested compromise to resolve the Cuban impasse. This proposal has been suggested previously by Brazilian officials, and its presentation at the UN reflects Brazil's interest in serving as mediator in the Cuban crisis.

Brazilian public opinion and news media overwhelmingly supported the US action, and several news commentators have strongly criticized the government for failure to come out decisively in favor of US action against Cuba. A small minority, including extremist, ultranationalist figures such as the President's brother-in-law, Leonel Brizzola, have expressed strong opposition to Brazilian support of the US in the OAS, the UN and in the quarantine. The Communists were obviously shocked by the sudden and forceful manner in which the US acted, and they have so far failed to promote any significant counter-demonstrations. It seems apparent that the Brazilian Government recognizes it has no option but to side with the US in the current situation, but, at the same time, it is anxious to find some means to soften the impact on leftist public opinion, particularly pro-Cuban student, labor, and political groups, of an anti-Cuban position.

Mexico

Mexico supports the US position in the Cuban crisis. President Lopez Mateos has indicated publicly that Mexico considers the possession of aggressive weapons by Cuba to constitute a menace to security and peace and, consequently, it is willing to support US action under inter-American treaties to counter this menace to hemispheric peace and security. He emphasized Mexico's concern, however, for finding a peaceful solution to the crisis. Mexico voted for the US-sponsored resolution approved unanimously by the OAS Council on October 23, but abstained on the second paragraph of the resolution. US action appears to meet with general popular acceptance in Mexico, and most responsible press organs show an understanding attitude without, in line with Lopez Mateos's statement, expressing vigorous support. There has been a minimum of anti-US reaction on the part of Communist and leftist extremist elements in Mexico, although the leftist press is strongly critical of the US action. It is likely that the Mexican Government will avoid any commitment to participate actively in the quarantine and that it will oppose any US move to intervene directly in Cuba, but otherwise it will probably continue to support the US position.

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Unsympathetic

Few African governments reacted with open hostility to the US move, and the possibility of a hot war seems to have constrained even the most radical regimes to caution. Only the Algerian leaders came out with unqualified support for "the Cuban people" and they published this view in the name of the Political Bureau of the ruling party, not as an official government declaration. *(b)(1)(b)(5)*

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